

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2055

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 826

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN, OROP, BU

SUBJ: USE OF KAVALA TRANSMITTER

REF: STATE 33432

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES TRANSMISSION ON MEDIUM WAVE IN BULGARIAN LANGUAGE COULD POSE PROBLEMS IN RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, SO-CALLED "MACEDONIAN QUESTION" IS NEVER FAR BENEATH SURFACE IN YUGOSLAV-BULGARIAN RELATIONS, AND RECENTLY HAS BEEN HEATED UP. OUR CONCERN IS THAT THE YUGOSLAVS WOULD BE UNHAPPY IF WE BEGAN BROADCASTING IN BULGARIAN LANGUAGE IN A MEDIUM WHICH WOULD SO READILY REACH A BROAD SPECTRUM OF THE MACEDONIAN POPULATION. PERTINENT TO THIS IS ONE OF THE ARGUMENTS THE YUGOSLAVS HAVE USED IN TRYING TO PERSUADE US TO MOVE AFN FROM 611 KHZ WHICH IS THE SAME FREQUENCY AS RADIO SARAJEVO. THIS ARGUMENT GOES THAT THE AMERICAN GI IN EUROPE PROBABLY LISTENS TO FM MORE THAN AM ANYWAY, AND DOESN'T NEED A MEDIUM WAVE BROADCAST, WHILE THE BOSNIAN PEASANT IS IN HIS FIRST GENERATION OF RADIO LISTENERSHIP,
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DOES NOT EVEN HAVE AN FM RECEIVER, AND WON'T GET

ONE. WE BELIEVE THEY WOULD MAINTAIN THE SAME HOLDS FOR MACEDONIA. THUS, TO COMMENCE BROADCASTING ON MEDIUM WAVE IN BULGARIAN LANGUAGE WOULD RUN A SIGNIFICANT RISK OF INSERTING US IN THE MIDDLE OF ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST ENIGMATIC DISPUTES IN THE BALKANS.

2. A SECOND CONSIDERATION IS THAT HIGH-RANKING MACEDONIANS HAVE IN THE PAST URGED THAT VOA BROADCAST IN MACEDONIAN. WE HAVE DECLINED TO DO SO CITING BUDGET REASONS. THE WHOLE QUESTION WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE OPENED AGAIN WERE WE TO MOVE TO MEDIUM WAVE IN BULGARIAN LANGUAGE.

3. ADDITIONALLY, WE FEEL THAT, IN VIEW OF RAPIDLY DETERIORATING SHORTWAVE PROPAGATION CONDITIONS, EVERY CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO APPLYING A MEDIUM WAVE RELAY TO ENTIRE EVENING VOA SERBO-CROATIAN BROADCAST, WHICH WOULD DEFINITELY IMPROVE RECEPTION DIFFICULTIES NOW BEING EXPERIENCED. ALTHOUGH UNFAMILIAR WITH ANTICIPATED VOA MAY SCHEDULES MENTIONED REFTEL, IT IS PREFERABLE THAT MUNICH MEDIUM WAVE RELAY BE APPLIED TO VOA SERBO-CROATIAN BROADCASTS BECAUSE MUNICH SIGNAL IS STRONGER THAN KAVALA SIGNAL. KAVALA MEDIUM WAVE RELAY CURRENTLY APPLIED TO LAST HALF-HOUR ONLY DURING VOA SERBO-CROATIAN BROADCAST, WHICH MAKES FOR CLUMSY PROGRAMMING. A FULL HOUR OF GOOD QUALITY MEDIUM WAVE SERBO-CROATIAN VOA BROADCASTING DAILY WOULD CERTAINLY SIGNIFY CONTINUED USG INTEREST IN YUGOSLAVIA AS COUNTRY AFTER CESSATION VOA SLOVENIAN BROADCASTS.

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